

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated December 15, 2003, prosecution was reopened, claims 5-11 are pending and claims 5-11 are rejected.

The above amendment is submitted to more particularly point out the subject matter regarded as invention. Applicants submit that the amendment is not required for patentability.

Objection was made to the specification in view of a reference to "patent claim 1" on page 2, line 1 of the specification. The above amendment replaces this language with the language of original claim 1.

Claims 5-11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(a) over Lang et al. (WO 00/23013). Lang, WO/00/23013, corresponds to the U.S. Patent No. 6,524,341 which was made of record in the office action date March 20, 2003. Lang ***fails*** to teach or suggest ***a toothed wheel***, as claimed herein. Instead, Lang describes an affixation ring (15) having recesses (28) on its inside surface acting as a second coupling element (7) (see column 5, lines 1 to 4 and Fig. 1 of the U.S. Patent No. 6,524,341). Moreover, the affixation ring (15) cannot function as the claimed tooth wheel. Instead, inner body (1) is moved axially within outer body (2) and, after the relative positions of the two bodies are adjusted, the affixation ring (15) is coupled to the inner body (15) to fix the axial positions of the two bodies (see, column 4, line 23 through column 5 line 48, Figs. 1-4).

Thus, it is not seen how the present invention is anticipated or would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art in view of Lang.

In view of the discussion above, it is respectfully submitted that the subject application is in a condition for allowance. Early and favorable action is requested.

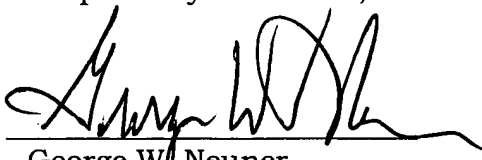
It is further noted that the Issue Fee and Publication Fee have already been paid due to the prPrior notice of allowance.

If for any reason a fee is required, a fee paid is inadequate or credit is owed for any excess fee paid, the Commissioner is hereby authorized and requested to charge Deposit Account No. **04-1105**.

Respectfully submitted,

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